AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the title at page 1, line 1, with the following rewritten title:

AN ARABIDOPSIS-SPECIFIC PROMOTER AND A GENETIC CONSTRUCT CONTAINING THE PROMOTER FOR EXPRESSION OF NUCLEIC ACIDS IN PLANTS~~CASSETTE FOR NUCLEIC ACID EXPRESSION IN PLANTS~~

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 12, line 12, with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- Optical microscopy photographies of *Arabidopsis* stomata present on leaf surface (bar= 5 μm). The stomata present on the epidermis of most of the aerial organs of soil plants are formed by two highly-specialized guard cells (g). Turgor changes in guard cells cause the aperture (~~panel~~ A) or the closure (~~panel~~ B) of the stomata rima. --

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 14, line 13, with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- For in-plate growth, the seeds were sterilized as follows: 5 min in absolute ethanol, 5 min in 0.6% (v/v) sodium hypochlorite, 0.05% ~~Tween~~ TWEEN 20, 2 washes in sterile water. The seeds were resuspended in 0.1% agarose sterile solution and germinated in Petri dishes containing 0.7% agarized MS medium (Sigma M-5519) added with 1% saccharose, pH 5.7. The plates were layered for 4 days at 4°C in the dark to allow uniform

germination and then placed at 22°C with 16 hr light (48 µE/m^2) and 8 hr dark periods. --

Please replace the paragraph at page 14, line 25, to page 15, line 15, with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- Seedlings that were grown in plates, as well as flowers or leaves from plants grown in soil, were placed in ~~Eppendorf~~ EPPENDORF tubes and frozen in liquid nitrogen. The tissues were minced in the tubes, by means of a plastic tip fixed to a bench drill, in the presence of 500 µl extraction buffer (7M urea, 350 mM Na_2SO_4, 50 mM Tris pH 8.0, 8 mM EDTA, 34 mM sarkosyl). The same volume of phenol and chloroform was then added (1:1 v:v) and, after vortexing, the samples were centrifuged at 13000 rpm for 5 min. The ~~surnatant~~ supernatant was placed in clean tubes and added with 400 µl of distilled water and 0.7 volumes of isopropanol. The DNA was precipitated by centrifugation of the samples at 13000 rpm for 10 min. Isopropanol was removed and the pellet washed with 300 µl of 80% ethanol. After removal of ethanol, the DNA was resuspended in 40 µl of 50 mM Tris-HCI pH 8.0, 20 µg/ml of 5 mM EDTA.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 16, line 3, with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- The PCR reactions were carried out with 0.5 µg genomic DNA in a reaction mixture containing ~~Red Taq~~ RED TAQ PCR

Reaction Buffer 1x (Sigma), dATP, dCTP, dGTP and dTTP (5 mM each), primers (25 µM each), 1 unit ~~Red Taq™~~ RED TAQ polymerase (Sigma) and sterile distilled water to a final volume of 25 µl. The amplification reaction was performed as follows: 1 min at 94°C; 40 cycles at 94°C for 15 sec, 15 sec at the annealing temperature specific for the primer pair utilized, 72°C for 1 min; 72°C for 10 min. The reaction products were separated by electrophoresis on 1% (w/v) agarose gel in TBE 1X (89mM Tris-base, 89 mM H2B03, 2 mM EDTA pH 8) and ~~analysed~~ analyzed with a UV transilluminator. The obtained bands were excised from the agarose gel and purified by means of ~~Qiaquick~~ QIAQUICK Gel Extraction Kit (Quiagen), according to the manufacturer's instructions.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 18, line 3, with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- Sterilized T1 seeds from transgenic plants were layered at 4°C in the dark for 4 days, and subsequently germinated in MS soil (Sigma M-5519), added with 0.8% ~~bactoagar~~ BACTOAGAR(Difco 0141-01) pH 5.7 and 100 µg/ml kanamycin. The plants were grown at 22°C, under 16hr light/8hr dark photoperiod.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 19, line 9, with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- After phenol chloroform extraction, the RNA was precipitated at 4°C in 4M LiCl, washed with 70% ethanol and resuspended in water treated with diethylpyrocarbonate (1% DEPC). 5µg total RNA were treated for 30 min with ~~Dnase~~ DNASE I (15 units - Boheringer Mannheim), following the manufacturer's protocol. The reverse-transcription reaction was performed with ~~Reverse Transcriptase Superscript™~~ REVERSE TRANSCRIPTASE SUPERSCRIPT II (Life Technologies), according to the manufacturer's indications, using the oligo(dT) primer, formed by 17 dT residues and by the adapter 5'-GGGAATTCGTCGACAAGC-3'. The cDNA samples were amplified in a reaction mixture containing ~~Red Taq~~ RED TAQ PCR Reaction Buffer 1X (Sigma) and 5mM dATP, dCTP, dGTP and dTTP, 25 µM specific primers (Table below), 1 unit ~~RED Taq™~~ RED TAQ polymerase (Sigma) and sterile distilled water to a final volume of 25 µl. The amplification was carried out under the following conditions: 1 min at 94°C ; 20 cycles at 94°C for 15 sec, 60°C for 15 sec, 72°C for 1 min; 72°C for 10 min. The PCR products were separated on 1% agarose gel and transferred to ~~Hybond~~ HYBOND N+ filters (Amersham) in 0.4N NaOH. Filters were hybridized with TSB1-, GUS-or GFP-specific probes amplified using the primers indicated in the Table below, and tagged with digoxigenin using the ~~DIG-High Prime~~ DIG-HIGH PRIME kit (Roche), following the manufacturer's instructions.--